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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Ethiopia/Eritrea	REPORT NO.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 20px;"></div>
SUBJECT	Protest to Haile Selassie by Eritreans against Heavy Taxation 25X1A	DATE DISTR.	4 June 1954
DATE OF INFO.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 280px; height: 30px;"></div>	NO. OF PAGES	1
PLACE ACQUIRED	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 280px; height: 30px;"></div>	REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
		REFERENCES	

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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SOURCE:

1. The peasants of Adi Ugri in Eritrea, inspired by Melake Selam Dimetros Fire, leader of the Menfesawi Mahaber,¹ and by Ato Kumulatchew Belleta, Political Officer of the Ethiopian Government, presented a petition to Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia. The petition protested against the heavy taxation levied on the peasants by Tedla Bairu, the Chief Executive of the Eritrean Government. The Emperor instructed the petitioners to come to Asmara on 9 February 1954 with representatives and chiefs from Akoleghizai, Hamassien, and other western areas of Eritrea.
 2. At the meeting in Asmara on 9 February the above delegates not only complained about their heavy tax burden but also asked for Union with Ethiopia since, they asserted, the country was incapable of supporting itself economically. The Emperor promised to pay to the Eritrean Government the 1954 tribute, an amount of \$Eth. 750,000. He made no specific answer to their request for Union, which is now desired by all Eritrean peasants.
 3. The \$Eth. 750,000 which the Emperor promised to pay on behalf of the peasants came from customs duties levied at the port of Massawa.
 4. The Vice-Representative of the Emperor in Eritrea, Asfeha Woldemikael, who comes from the Akoleghezai district and who is responsible for the pro-Union feeling in that district, was given the "Ethiopian Star," and a gold medal. His title of Fitaurari, originally granted by the Italians, was confirmed by the Emperor as a reward for his pro-Union activities.
1. Comment. The Menfesawi Mahaber (spiritual association) is an Ethiopian-sponsored semi-religious organization whose aim is to further the aims of union between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

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